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## **Approximately 180 Kilograms of Cocaine Seized from Plane at Lancaster Airport**

U.S. Attorney Richard B. Roper announced today that two men who were arrested yesterday when U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agents seized approximately 180 kilograms of cocaine from a plane that flew into Lancaster Airport late yesterday morning, have been charged in a federal complaint with knowingly and intentionally conspiring to possess with the intent to distribute in excess of five kilograms of cocaine, in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 846, 841(a)(1) and (b)(1)(A). This afternoon the defendants, Mexican nationals, made their initial appearance before the Honorable Jeff Kaplan, United States Magistrate Judge who detained them pending a probable cause and detention hearing on Monday, February 7, 2005, before the Honorable Irma C. Ramirez, United States Magistrate Judge. The street value of the cocaine seized is estimated to be \$3 million.

According to ICE, special agents received information that the inbound plane might be carrying drugs. Upon questioning the two passengers immediately after landing, the ICE special agents were allowed to search the small plane, which was loaded with 167 bricks of cocaine totaling 180 kilograms.

"This is an excellent example of how both immigration and customs laws have been integrated and used to fight drug smuggling," said Kenneth W. Cates, ICE Dallas special agent in charge of investigations.

U.S. Attorney Roper praised the excellent work of ICE special agents. The investigation is ongoing and the case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Suzanna Etessam.

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